



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2014 Volume I: Picture Writing

Pictures Tell the Story -- From Caves to Comics: Using Images from French History to Motivate Reluctant Language Learners

Guide for Curriculum Unit 14.01.07

by Laura Rais

Images from French history – the Lascaux cave paintings, the Bayeux Tapestry, the Lady and the Unicorn Tapestries, and *les bandes dessinées* (comic books) *Astérix* and *Tintin* – will be used to create interest, motivation, and engagement for beginning learners of French. Faced with reluctant language learners who actively resist taking notes, teachers need to adopt a more visual approach to teaching French classes. Tapping into student habits of doodling and interest in visual media, such as graphic novels and video games, artwork, rather than English translation, will promote vocabulary learning and encourage the use of French in classroom conversations.

Students will use simple French vocabulary and language expressions to describe the images and will research in English what the artwork reveals about French history, culture, symbols, and practices. Students will compare, contrast, and create pictorial stories of French civilization from pre-history through the twentieth century: cave paintings, tapestries, and comics. This curriculum unit supports communication, cultures, and comparison objectives of the national and state world language standards as well as visual arts content standards for media, history and cultures. Although developed for sixth-grade exploratory French students, the unit plan may be adapted to more advanced levels of language proficiency.

(Recommended for French, grades 6-9)

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2019 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University

For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>